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Reporting for the Newspapers

REPORTING
FOR THE
NEWSPAPERS

By
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PREFACE

EXPERIENCE is the best teacher for the reporter, but he must know how to go about getting the experience: must have a foundation on which to build.

This work may serve as that foundation and as a guide for those reporters who have gained their experience in a desultory way, and who therefore fail to make intelligent use of it.

It will also give an idea of what the work of the reporter really is.

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I.

REPORTING

WRITING for the newspapers is a business; nothing more. A would-be newspaper man must serve an apprenticeship much the same as though he were to be a bookkeeper or a shoemaker. He must learn just what to write, when to write it, and how to write it. Above all he must learn of the things that should not be written. He must have a style, too; a newspaper style that is like nothing else in the world of writing.

The material of the newspaper writer is always awaiting him. There is usually more than he wants. His duty is to collect it. There need be no seeking for

plot. Nature, in every phase, is there ready to be "written up" for the benefit of those who do not study it for themselves at close range. The task is interesting but not easy, for the writer must dig below the surface of things to extract the interest.

Any fairly well-educated person can become a reporter. It depends upon himself whether he is ordinary or exceptional; whether he is a mere machine, commonplace and conventional, or whether he is brilliant or unusual, writing of ordinary subjects with a dash and vigor that command and hold attention.

He must be able to gather news and write it. There are many reporters esteemed of the highest class who possess these qualities only to a limited degree. A man may have ability to collect news,

and yet write of it so badly that his service is imperfect. Then, on the other hand, there are poor news-gatherers who write with perfect newspaper diction when the news is collected for them. Naturally, men of both types are useful to a paper, but it is when a man can both collect the news and write it properly that he becomes in the highest degree valuable.

Success depends upon the method which the reporter pursues. If he works with a definite object in view, he will make daily progress. But if he goes ahead aimlessly he will not make much headway.

Most young men enter the newspaper business with the hope and expectation of immediately becoming famous. When a bookkeeper enters a mercantile house it is with the one idea of making his living. But it seems that the newspaper business

throws forth a certain glamour. There is a fascination in the idea that one's work will stand out for the world to examine and pass upon; that boys will rush through the streets loudly calling general attention to some article that one has written.

At the very start the hope of personal fame should be abandoned. To go into the business of writing for the newspapers as a means of earning a living is well and good, but a man's name is not going to be known throughout the land simply because he writes for the papers. As a rule, he is unknown beyond a very limited circle; the reading public knows nothing of him personally, but only the paper in which his work appears.

Newspaper work often leads into literary lines, as it gives an ease of expression that might not otherwise be obtained; but

other things besides actual work on the newspaper must be done before the writer can hope to be recognized.

A reporter should have an eye quick to observe detail, and a knowledge of how to write plain facts in a simple manner. Accuracy and brevity should be cultivated, and the faculty of knowing how at a moment's notice to make a great deal out of very little and a little out of a great deal.

The reporter must keep in touch with men, women, and things, if he hopes to write sympathetically. If he has been a student of human nature before going into the business, it will be a great aid to him. If not, he must become one. This should not be difficult, for he will be thrown into contact with all sorts and conditions of men, and knowledge will come to him unconsciously.

An idea prevails that the reporter has but to record what has actually happened. He has to do more than this; for he must look below the surface for the vital causes that produce conventional effects. His power to do this depends upon the depth of his knowledge of human nature.

People witnessing occurrences and afterward reading of them in the newspapers find them not always accurate in detail as they have seen them. This is because the reporter has condensed and sifted out what is of interest and elaborated upon that. If he analyzes, it is with bold sweeps and dashes, retaining the main interest and casting out the trivial.

In all news items there are certain forms that may be followed. It is well, however, not to get into the habit of writing by form, as that leads to conventionality

of expression. Most reporters are conventional and therefore commonplace and uninteresting. It is a fault that should be shunned.

Some reporters never get beyond certain conventional expressions, but resort to them over and over again. In a subsequent chapter many of these expressions will be given.

II.

WHAT IS NEWS?

THE purpose of the newspapers is to print news.

What is news? Except those who write it, there are few who really know. Even those dealing with the reporter year after year seldom are able to judge of what an editor will print and what he will not even read.

News is something more than what has happened, or is about to happen. It is more than the account of an accident or peculiar incident; an interview with a prominent person or a report of an international event. These things go to make up news, but the news idea goes deeper still and has a broader scope.

News is that which will interest humanity at large. It affects masses rather than individuals. Thus it will be seen that an international event, for example, is always news, because it interests or affects a large number of people. Naturally the greater the number of people affected the greater the value of the news.

In collecting news, the reporter takes each fact presented and examines it to see that the human interest is there, whether the matter is local or general, whether it will interest many people and to what extent it will interest.

As the reporter works day after day, this process of reasoning becomes second nature to him, and he finally appears to disregard it and jump to a conclusion at once, recognizing by instinct rather than by judgment what is news and what is

not. He has served his apprenticeship when his mind can render a decision instinctively, requiring only a flash of thought.

The human interest of a story may reveal itself in many ways. There is no way in which a person can be taught to recognize it save by experience. This experience may be obtained by constant reading of the papers, analyzing each item to see just what is in the story (everything that a reporter writes, whether a paragraph or a column, is a "story"), in what manner the news has been collected and how written up. It may also be obtained by accompanying the reporter on his work and then analyzing the story he writes. Still better is actual personal work, after the fundamental ideas have been mastered.

For those who desire to gain this ex-

perience by reading the papers, certain examples are given herewith. In each instance the illustration is of the most pronounced type so that there can be no mistaking the meaning. All the extracts given in this and subsequent chapters are from stories which have actually appeared in the daily papers.

The human interest may be embodied in the unusual or unexpected circumstances surrounding some ordinary happening; something unnatural and appalling; or in a commonplace accident or incident that occurs in a peculiar manner.

When the reporter understands what news is, he can appreciate its importance. In proportion as it is important, that is, in the proportion that it will affect the greatest number of people, must it be written up in detail.

The story of a man killed by falling from a window may be worth a "stick" or a column according to the attending circumstances. Here is a case where it was worth but a few lines:

"James Egelson, a carpenter, 37 years old, while intoxicated this morning fell from a third-story window at his home, 1621 Third Avenue. His skull was fractured, and he died before medical aid could be summoned."

The man was intoxicated and while in that condition he fell. If he had been walking in his sleep, after being at work for thirty-six hours, imagining in his dream that he was continuing his work; or if he had been forced to work while his wife lay dying at home, then the story would have been worth a great deal more as it would have had more of the element of human interest. There would have

been compassion for the man and for the wife. Whether the man was killed or not in the least injured would not make the slightest difference in the length of the story. True, there is much human interest in death always, but the frequency with which it is recorded has made it commonplace as an item of news unless surrounded by unusual circumstances. The interest in the man and wife under the possible circumstances mentioned would be far greater than the knowledge of whether they are living or dead. Of course, if the wife were to die when told of her husband's fall, that would make a difference in the length of the story, not so much because of the woman's death, but in that the human interest would be heightened.

That death is by no means the acme of human interest in the eyes of the editors

was aptly shown, a short time ago, by the accounts of two fires which occurred within a few days of each other.

In one, two people were burned to death, and three others so severely injured that they were removed to a hospital where they were confined for weeks. The damage amounted to ten thousand dollars.

In the second fire not a person was injured, and the damage was only five hundred dollars.

Still, the second fire was given twice as much space as the other.

The fatal fire occurred in a dyeing establishment. It was started by an explosion of benzine in the basement, and soon cut off the escape of twenty people who worked on the upper floors. Fireman extinguished the flames and found the dead and injured in the building. This was an

ordinary story, the chief interest lying in the fact that several people were burned to death. The story was given half a column.

The other story, which was given a column, was of a fire in an Italian tenement at three o'clock in the morning. The flames broke out in a room where the tenants had erected a shrine of worship. Policemen had difficulty in arousing the sleeping people and they became panic-stricken. Two children failed to get out of the building by way of the stairs, and when the smoke became too dense to permit of their leaving the room, they had to be taken to the roof by firemen by means of great hooks. When the fire was extinguished, it was found that jewelry that had been in the shrine room was missing.

Here was a story abounding in human interest. Not only were lives endan-

gered, but rescues were made in a novel manner.

Here is the story, as printed in *The World.*

FIRE! PANIC! THEFT!

Thrilling Rescue of Two Girls From a Burning Building.

"A fire broke out at 3.30 o'clock this morning in the three-story Italian tenement at 56 Mulberry Street, and there were a number of narrow escapes from death.

"When the fire had been extinguished, it was found that in a number of rooms where the firemen had worked, considerable money and jewelry were missing.

"The tenement was once painted white, and though the paint has long since worn from the bricks, the house still stands out prominently, far better than the others in the neighborhood. The building is well

known to all the people in the street, as it is the residence of Sabina Romalo, the wealthiest man in Mulberry Bend. Romalo is estimated to be worth $90,000. He has a maccaroni factory in Mott Street. He leases the tenement house, and lives in it with his wife and six children.

"On the ground floor, Francisco Carro keeps a grocery store. On the top floor, Genero Romalo, a brother of the maccaroni manufacturer, lives with Barbara, his wife, and their five children.

"In a little hall bed-room on the top floor which faces the street, the Italians have erected a shrine to St. Joseph. It is a statue of marble, which was purchased by them a year ago. Around the neck of the statue was a heavy gold chain of elaborate workmanship and curious design, and pendant from it a massive gold locket. On the pedestal, there were four gold rings. It was in this shrine room that the fire broke out from some unknown cause.

"Policeman James Donlin, who has the Mulberry Street post, from Bayard to

Worth streets, saw a glare of the flames through the shutters of the little room. He blew his whistle for aid, and rushed up into the building.

"The policeman stumbled through the dark halls and up the narrow stairs, but his cries of alarm had no effect. When he got to the top floor, the flames had already burst from the room of devotion, and were eating their way along the hall. Donlin broke in the door of Genero Romalo's room. Then his great trouble began. When the family were aroused to the fact that the house was on fire, they seemed paralyzed with fear, and not one of them would leave the rooms.

"Mrs. Barbara Romalo held her seven-months-old child, Nicholo, in one arm, while with the other she clung to the bed-post and refused to move. The policeman used force to take the child away from her. With it he ran down the stairs, and gave it to Policeman Moore, who was on the second floor landing trying to wake the other people. In the mean time, another policeman had turned in an alarm.

The rest of the people in the house were panic-stricken. The place was filled with the wild shrieks of the maccaroni manufacturer and his family as they tried to crowd down the stairs all at once.

"Policeman Donlin went again to the top floor to urge the people there to escape. Not one of them would move. Smoke filled the top of the building, and the policeman from inhaling this became faint. He started to go down the stairs for help, when he fainted and fell to the second floor. From there he was carried down to the street by Policeman Walsh. He was unconscious for ten minutes.

"Truck No. 1 was the first to arrive. The firemen immediately ran a ladder up to the window of the shrine room, from which smoke poured. By this time the fire had got to the stairway on the top floor and cut off the means of escape for the members of the Romalo family there. The people had made their way to the front, but were at windows at the other end of the house from which the ladder had been placed.

"With pale and frightened faces they looked from the window screaming for help.

"Genero Romalo stood on the window-sill and yelled to the great crowd of people below that he would jump. They motioned to him to remain where he was.

"While the firemen were getting the ladder over to the proper window, other people had got to the roof. All were taken down the ladder with the exception of two of the children, Victoria Romalo, thirteen years old, and Theresa, her sister, eighteen years. They made their way to another window, and the firemen could not get near them.

"To the people in the street, it looked as though these girls would certainly perish in the flames, when suddenly two firemen appeared at the edge of the roof, directly over the window where the girls stood crying for help.

"The firemen, lying flat on the roof, lowered a swinging ladder which they hooked into the dress of Victoria, and raised her toward the roof. For a minute

the girl dangled in the air forty feet above the ground. Not a sound was heard from the people below. Then the child was landed safely on the roof, and a great shout went up. Theresa was rescued in the same manner.

"The firemen had stretched lines of hose through the house and to the roof. While some of them worked on the flames, others were endeavoring to quiet the people in the large tenement house in the rear.

"These people were panic-stricken, and had fled by means of fire-escapes and the roof in their night clothes, although the fire could not by any chance have reached them. In half an hour the flames were extinguished, after having done $500 damage.

"When the Romalos returned to their rooms, they made a startling discovery. Every piece of jewelry that had been on the statue when the fire broke out had disappeared. Genero Romalo had also left 65 cents on his table, that was gone too.

Policeman Donlin said that he had not

gone into the burning room, and that nobody had gone into it but the firemen.

"While a search was being made for the jewelry, Sabine Romalo rushed out of his rooms. He also had a loss to report. He had left a pocket-book containing fifty dollars on his table, and when he returned after the fire he found the pocketbook on the floor empty. He had left his one-hundred-and-fifty dollar gold watch in his vest and that was gone.

"Romalo said the firemen had been through his rooms and must have seen the pocketbook. None of the firemen would admit that they had seen the missing things. Policemen Donlin reported the various losses at the Elizabeth Street Station, and the captain said there would be a thorough investigation."

. . . . . .

Now see how the reporter has gathered his facts and what use he has made of them.

First, it is interesting to know some-

thing of the building where the fire occurred, so he has told that, and also something of the principal person living there.

Local color is a great factor in a story.

Next he writes of the statue in the shrine room. Then the stolen locket, chain, and rings are described. These facts the reporter gleaned from the people in the house and neighborhood.

Then follows a description of the first sight of the flames, the trouble which the policeman had in arousing the tenants and the panic which ensued. This matter was obtained from the policeman.

Then comes the account of the work of the firemen, and of the thrilling rescue of the girls; this information being obtained from interviews with several of the firemen.

Finally there is the complete record of

the missing valuables and the explanation of how the losses were reported to the police.

Firemen were believed by many to have been responsible for the loss of the jewelry, but to have stated this as a fact would have been libel. So the story is told in so far as it is positively known, and the reader is left to draw his own conclusions.

Sensational features always give an added news importance to a story, even though the persons involved are unknown. Thus one suicide may be worth a column, whereas another can be disposed of in four lines. This, too, when both victims are in the same circumstances.

Here is a case where a suicide was worth little space from a newspaper man's point of view:

"Henry Bosment, a French shoemaker, 60 years old, who had been ill with consumption for some time, committed suicide yesterday in his little shop in the basement of 192 Varick Street. He shot himself in the head and died instantly. Bosment was sitting lifeless on his bench when discovered by his wife. The couple had no children."

Two weeks before, in a crowded tenement within a few blocks of Bosment's shop, there had been another suicide. The man was an Italian fruit peddler. He was if possible of less importance than Bosment, but his death was given ten times the amount of space because of its sensational features. First he took paris green. The poison not acting quickly enough, he shot himself in the head. People in the house heard the report and ran to his room on the fifth floor. He heard them coming and when they reached

his room he was standing on the fire-escape, and before any one could prevent him had jumped to the pavement. When picked up he was dead. There was sensation in this triple attempt at self-destruction that made it a very good story.

The unusual is of great news importance. So that when a young woman of Brooklyn twisted her hair around her neck and strangled herself to death, the story was given nearly a column.

One would think that policemen above all others would know when they came across a bit of news. But they do not, not they. No day passes but the reporter realizes this fact. When there is an accident or a murder or anything requiring the presence of the police, they will tell you everything when questioned except the news there is in it. In the matter of

small accidents the police never see anything. To them nothing is news unless somebody is killed. There may be in the occurrence a story that is worth a column, but the reporter will only get at it by the most persistent questioning, and sometimes not then.

In one case of this kind the policeman told a rambling story of a suicide, commonplace and conventional. The most inexperienced reporter would have at once seen that there was nothing more than a mere mention of it necessary. As the news-gatherer was about to leave the scene, the policeman remarked casually:

"Oh, yes, and this man was building a house to-day, and it fell down."

With this clew and by dint of questioning, the reporter found that the man had been a contractor; that he had secured

the contract to build a little wooden carpenter shop, and that through some carelessness on the part of his workmen the house fell. The contractor grieved so over this that he straightway went home and committed suicide by taking carbolic acid.

As the story was first told by the policeman, the man was said to be a German living alone and no one knew of any reason why he should have wished to die. The policeman went on to tell of the particular kind of acid that the man had taken, and how it would eat through an iron plate if left for a long enough time. He seemed to think this of interest, but it was commonplace enough to the reporter, as hundreds of people kill themselves every year by drinking acid. The real point of the story—a man taking his life for such a compara-

tively trivial matter as failure in his work —escaped the policeman. Yet by his casual remark he unconsciously gave the clew, though the details had to be sought elsewhere.

Court clerks, judges, politicians, men who are constantly interviewed, are equally ignorant of what news is. These in particular are mentioned, as it would seem that after years of association with reporters they would learn something of the nature of their work. The ideas of the average citizen on the subject are still more vague. Speaking with a reporter they tell him all manner of things which they are sure he would like to write about, and he often makes enemies and has to give long explanations as to why the stories they suggest will not serve as news. Sometimes they offer a story that would

advertise the man who tells it and which a paper would demand two dollars a line for giving publicity. Or perhaps they see something very interesting in a distinctly local matter that would not be of the slightest importance to the general public.

The reporter must learn first of all what news is, and use discrimination in writing it up.

III.

THE NEWS COLLECTED.

OF the great number who read daily the results of the newspaper men's work, few give thought to the labor by which the news is collected.

This may be for the very simple reason that they have no desire to know anything about it.

Those who write for the newspapers have never made any secret of their method of work, and he who runs may read; yet to many people the workings of a newspaper office seems fairly mysterious. Naturally, news is carefully guarded until publication, that the people buying the papers may receive it fresh. Interested

persons who try to suppress news are often puzzled when they see the matter appear in spite of their efforts. If the manner of collecting news were more generally known the difficulty in suppressing it would be better understood.

There is a prevailing notion that the editor of the newspaper each morning calls his reporters to him and starts them out over the city with instructions to look for news and gather it in wherever they happen to find it. In reality this work is done in a very different manner and under a perfect system. Yet the public can hardly know this of themselves, as only the results of the reporter's work appear in the paper and not the process by which they are obtained.

In New York, for example, there is not the smallest portion of the city that is not

"covered" at all times—in other words, that is not directly under the eye of the reporter.

One class of reporters are known as Department Men. One of these is stationed at every point where routine news comes in every day. These men are everywhere—in the courts, in all public department offices, at the headquarters of police, at the City Hall, the exchanges, and in Wall Street. Each man is responsible for the news in his particular department and for nothing else.

Then there are the men who do general work—these look after such news as arises outside of the departments.

The first duty of the day of one of the office men is to read every paper published in the city. From these are clipped announcements of all events in which there

will be news and which are to occur in the future; in fact, everything of interest. The announcements for the current day are taken out, and the others are pasted in an indexed book for future reference. The day's clippings are then sorted, and each subject is given to a different "general work" man to cover. He then collects the news relating to that one subject and writes a report of it.

There is always in the office an emergency man, sometimes half a dozen, ready to be called upon at a moment's notice should anything of unusual importance arise.

So it will be seen that every man has his especial work to do, and the editor knows at every moment exactly what each man is doing.

The number of men assigned to any special task depends upon the importance

of the story and the various "ends" to be covered.

Perhaps this mere outline of the manner in which the men work is enough to indicate a system which is as perfect as can be, by which the news is collected and given to the public without loss of a moment.

The various newspapers have various sources of information, and the barest hint of the existence of a story serves to send, if necessary, a dozen men to different points to trace it.

News arising from casualties is the simplest to cover.

In the case of accidents whether important, as of the falling of a house, or trivial as of a man falling and being slightly hurt, all are at once telephoned to the Headquarters of Police by the policemen. From that point the record reaches the

newspaper offices in a few minutes through the reporter stationed at Headquarters, and other men are sent out to get the story in detail.

It is a good thing for a new reporter to understand in the beginning that all the work is done by assignment, and that his duty is simply to do what he is told under the directions of a general in the person of the editor who directs the movements of the entire force.

A reporter cannot have too much general information. Sooner or later he is sure to have use for anything that he may know. If a man is assigned to an interview with a prominent foreign official, he will obtain it more easily and write of it more interestingly if he understands something of foreign affairs. Of course he should know as much as possible of

United States politics, as of political matters he will often be called upon to write.

As an illustration of how little the news-collecting system is understood by outsiders, take the case of a young man who was anxious to become a reporter.

For several weeks he called persistently at a newspaper office seeking employment. One Saturday afternoon he was told that he would be given a trial the following Monday.

Monday morning the young man failed to appear. At five o'clock in the afternoon, however, he hurried into the office, signs of agitation upon his face and in his hand a note-book. It was found that he had been working diligently for five hours. He had started out early in the morning to "hunt for news." In the neighborhood of an engine house just before noon

he had heard an alarm bell. He knew from reading the papers that fires were news, and finding that this fire was some six or seven miles uptown he jumped on a car and in course of time arrived at the point whence the alarm had been sent out. There he found that there had been a slight blaze in a basement! With great industry he secured the names of the people in the house, the number of engines that had been on hand, a description of the house itself, and a vast amount of other information.

With this he had hurried to the newspaper office to report.

There he was told that the story of that particular fire had been telephoned to the office some four hours earlier, by the man in whose district it had occurred and whose special duty it was to cover it.

IV.

THE REPORTER AT WORK.

AS has been said, few people know what really is news. Therefore the reporter must be most persevering in order to be a successful collector of it. Those whom he may interview, even though they be ever so ready and willing to assist him, will dwell on many irrelevant subjects, and it is only by persistent questioning that he will be able to extract the real news from the torrent of words poured into his ears.

Still more persistent must he be when he interviews a person who does not wish to talk and who tries by every means to hide that which he is asked to tell. In

this case the reporter has before him a difficult task, and he must not be discouraged that he is compelled to ask many questions that seem at first thought useless. He must push his investigations until he is quite sure that no one coming after him can obtain any more information than has been given to him.

The questions to be asked will, naturally, be inspired by the nature of the information desired.

A general suggestion that might well be made just here is, never use shorthand in ordinary newspaper reporting. Many a man who would otherwise have made a good reporter has remained mediocre by attempting verbatim reporting, and many a good story has for this reason been spoiled. The mind, concentrated upon the shorthand notes, is diverted from the

points of the story, and that which is of the most value is overlooked. In the writing out of the story there is a mass of notes to be gone over. Besides these objections there are often times when it is impossible to take notes of any kind, and when the mere suspicion that a reporter is at hand will serve to close the channels of information. Therefore to form the habit of taking copious notes is to hamper one's self in many ways.

Take as few notes as possible. Jot down names and addresses and train the memory to supply the rest. Then the whole attention can be given to every word that is said.

If a speech or lengthy address is to be reported verbatim a special stenographer is always assigned to the task.

It is a popular belief that to be a real

reporter one must carry a note-book. This is not the case. Note-books are used only by reporters in stories and plays. The few necessary notes can be taken on a bit of paper, and there is no need of letting every one you meet know that you are a reporter.

* * * * * *

Here is an account of just how a reporter does his work, from the time he goes out on the story until it is published; how he conducts his interviews; what notes he takes and how he writes:

The first information came to the news gatherer when he was stationed at the Headquarters of Police, where, at seven o'clock in the morning, this bulletin was posted:

"Tenth Precinct.

"At 6:15 A. M. Officer Charles Muller

brought here the dead body of unknown man, who died suddenly in front of 63 East Houston Street. About 35, dark hair, sack coat, light striped pants, brown soft hat, gray stockings. Supposed to be J. C. Carter of 61 Bond Street."

With this in mind the reporter started out to see what news there was in the occurrence more than that contained in the bulletin.

First he looked for policeman Muller and found him on post within a block of the spot where the body was first seen.

The following interview then took place between the reporter and the policeman:

Question. Officer, you found that man's body down the street, did you not?

Answer. The tramp? Yes.

Q. Was he dead when you found him?

A. Yes. There was a crowd around him. It was about half-past five.

Q. Do you know what he died of?

A. The doctor thought it was alcoholism.

Q. Where was it you found him?

A. Down there in front of The Morgue, at No. 63.

Q. The Morgue?

A. That liquor store: that's what they call it, The Morgue.

Q. Why do they call it The Morgue?

A. I don't know, that's just a name it's got.

Q. Do you know anything about the man, who he is or his family, or anything?

A. No, I don't know. I believe he went into the saloon and asked for a drink and was thrown out. There was a letter in his pocket addressed to Carter, J. C. Carter. It said 61 Bond Street on it. I guess he's a lodging-house tramp. There

were some other memoranda books, and fifteen cents in his pockets. That's all I know about him.

Q. You haven't been around to Bond Street, have you?

A. No, what do I want to go around there for? We'll just send the body to the morgue if nobody comes for it. Why don't you go down and see the people at the saloon.

This is all the policeman could or would tell, so the reporter went into the saloon to find out why the man had been thrown out. There the bartender was seen, and this is the interview which followed:

Q. What do you know about that dead man?

A. He's a bum. He came in here and asked for a drink. I wouldn't give it to him. I told him it was against the

boss's orders to give drinks to bums. I won't sell drinks to bums. He monkeyed around for a few minutes, then he went out and fell dead right in front of the door.

Q. Did he have any money?

A. Yes, he had fifteen cents, but that don't make any difference. If I'd a sold it to him he'd a hung around all day.

Q. Did you put him out?

A. I told him he'd have to move on.

Q. Who owns this place?

A. Aaron Herzberg.

Q. Well, didn't he say anything when he asked for the drink?

A. No, nothing except "hurry up, I feel faint and dizzy," or something of that kind. I thought he just had the D. T.'s and was giving me a jolly. He was shaking, and looked as though he had been on about a three months' tear.

Q. What time was he here?

A. It was just twenty-five minutes after five. I remember I looked at the clock just as he went out.

Number 61 Bond Street the reporter found to be a house in which there was a grocery store on the ground floor and a photograph gallery up-stairs. The gallery was kept by Bruno Schentner.

The grocery store was not open at that early hour in the morning, so the news-gatherer went up to the gallery. There he was met by a woman, who proved to be Mrs. Schentner.

She was interviewed.

Q. Have you a man named Carter working here?

A. Yes, he works sometimes. He is our agent.

Q. When did you see him last?

A. Last night. Did you want to see him?

Q. Are you related to him in any way?

A. Oh, no. He just works here.

Q. Well, he died this morning.

A. Oh, my! I saw him last night.

Q. He died this morning. Do you know where he lived?

A. In some lodging house on the Bowery, I think. He got all his mail here.

Q. Has he any relatives that you know of?

A. No. Wait; there is a man that he has been going with a great deal. He will be here soon, if you could wait a few minutes. There he is now. Don't you see him over there sitting on the steps? He knows Carter better than any one else.

I guess he will be able to tell you all about him. What did Carter die of?

"Dropped dead," the reporter answered briefly as he went through the door.

Across the street, sitting on a stone stoop, there was a man in a faded suit. The newspaper man approached and questioned him.

Q. Do you know J. C. Carter?

A. J. G. Carter I know.

Q. He works for Schentner?

A. Yes.

Q. Do you know where he lives?

A. No. What do you want of him?

Q. I want to find some of his relatives.

A. I don't know; if you want to leave any note for him, I will give it to him. I am waiting for him, he will be here before long.

Q. No, you will not give him any note, and there is no use waiting for him; he's dead.

A. Dead? Well, I'm not much surprised. I was a little afraid to go around with him; I thought he would drop dead. Did he drop dead?

Q. Yes.

A. Where?

Q. In Houston Street. How long have you known him?

A. About a year. He was an Englishman, as I am.

Q. How long had he been in this country.

A. He told me about four years. His relatives are wealthy.

Q. Is that so? Where do they live?

A. In England. I think his brother is a minister.

Q. Somewhere in England?

A. In a suburb of London; he has money.

Q. In what suburb, do you know?

A. No, I don't know, but he told me the name often. Let me see. Yes, it's in Hearne Hill. That's it. Carter was an educated man.

Q. He was?

A. Oh, yes. Nobody could talk to him for five minutes without finding out that he was a man of refinement. He was an elegant talker and a fine salesman, but booze killed him.

Q. He drank a good deal, then?

A. Always; he would make a few dollars, and then spend them on booze. Then he would hang the bartender up for a week. He had good positions; he worked for Jere Johnson.

Q. The real estate agent?

A. Yes, and he worked for William Bartman in Broadway, and a number of others, but he lost all of his positions by boozing.

Q. Is his father living?

A. No. His father died when he was about eighteen, he told me. He and his brother were just finishing their education. His mother died before that. His father lost all his money speculating.

Q. Did he ever hear from his brother?

A. Sure. His brother used to send him money. He was a great lace salesman. He worked for a London lace house and about nine years ago went to Australia for them. But booze knocked him out, and his brother sent him to this country, to get rid of him, I guess.

Q. Was he a good-looking man?

A. Sure. He would have been if he did not drink so much. Where is the body?

Q. At the Mulberry street police station.

This is all that could be gotten out of the friend, so the reporter left him. From the city directory he looked up the address of Jere Johnson and William Bartman.

Here are the notes the reporter took in getting the story:

Aaron Herzberg.
Bruno Schentner.
Country, four years.
Hearne Hill.
Jere Johnson, 60 Liberty street.
William Bartman, 174 B'way.

Besides these he had the police slip before him. Relying upon his memory for the rest, he wrote the story thus:

HIS LIFE FOR A DRINK.

Bartender Refused to Sell Carter, Who Dropped Dead.

Brother of an English Clergyman, He Was Ruined by Drink.

J. G. Carter, an intelligent-looking Englishman, 34 years old, who is said to belong to a respectable family in London, fell dead on the sidewalk in front of Aaron Herzberg's saloon, 63 East Houston street, at 5:25 o'clock this morning, after the bartender had refused to sell him a drink.

Carter entered the saloon, according to the bartender's story, and ordered some whiskey, laying the fifteen cents on the counter.

"Hurry up," he commanded, "I feel faint and dizzy."

"No, I cannot sell you anything. It is against the boss's orders to sell anything to bums. Get out and be quick," the bar-

tender, according to his own story, replied.

Carter staggered to the door of the dingy rum shop, with an imprecation on his lips. He stumbled out upon the sidewalk, and fell in a heap at the curb, insensible.

When policeman Muller came up a few minutes later and elbowed his way through the crowd, he saw that the man was dead.

The body was removed to the Mulberry Street station house on a stretcher and the clothing searched for some means of identification. A letter addressed to J. G. Carter, 61 Bond Street, several memorandum books, and fifteen cents, were found.

Inquiries at 61 Bond Street elicited the information that Carter had been employed there by Bruno Schentner, a photographer, as a soliciting agent. He roomed in a Bowery lodging house, and received his mail at the Bond Street number.

He managed to make a living by canvassing for different business firms ; among others for Jere Johnson, a real estate agent

at 61 Liberty Street, and William Bartman, jewelry dealer at 174 Broadway.

After the coroner views the body it will be sent to the morgue, and will undoubtedly be buried in Potter's Field.

From one of Carter's friends in this city it was ascertained that his family in London was at one time wealthy. Early in his life his mother died, and when he was eighteen years old and finishing his education at an English university with his brother, his father died. Before his death the elder Carter had met with some financial reverses, so the sons were left with nothing but their education.

Carter's brother had studied for the ministry, and he soon accepted a charge at Hearne Hill, a suburb of London. He is still there.

Carter entered a lace maker's establishment, and after five years became their head traveller. He sold lace in various European countries until 1885, when he went to Australia in the interest of his employers.

At first a moderate drinker, the habit

grew upon him, so that in 1888 he was withdrawn from Australia and deprived of his position. From that time on his downfall was rapid. His brother at Hearne Hill helped him with money and advice, and finally four years ago he came to this country by means of money furnished by his brother. Here he prospered for a time, his command of language and his ability as a salesman procuring for him positions. But love of drink finally ruined him.

. . . . . .

Another reporter did not see so much news in the story. This is what he wrote:

"James G. Carter, an Englishman 35 years old, dropped dead this morning in a saloon known as 'The Morgue' at 63 East Houston Street. He entered the place apparently suffering from an attack of delirium tremens, and asked the bartender to give him a drink. The bartender told him he had had too many already. 'All right,' said the man feebly,

'I'll have to try somewhere else.' He turned toward the door, but had taken scarcely a dozen steps when he fell on the floor. A policeman who was summoned found that the man was dead.

"Carter was employed as a canvasser by a photographer named Schentner, of 61 Bond Street. It was said that he came of a wealthy family in England, and that his brother was a clergyman in one of the suburbs of London. The man was sent to this country because of his drinking habit. He died from a combination of alcoholism and consumption."

It needs only a comparison of the interviews with the written story to show how the news was separated from the useless information. The reporter has nothing to do with the head lines. They are written by the editor, or one of the desk men.

V.

A NEWS STORY ANALYZED.

NEWSPAPER stories are all similar in construction, however much their subjects may differ. An analysis of one is an analysis of all. All have component parts, divisions and subdivisions, which must be adhered to if the story is to be complete.

Thus a certain amount of sameness exists in them all, and the editors issue general instructions regarding their composition which must be followed.

Some papers permit more freedom of expression than others, and the reporter is able to disguise the set form, as the flesh covers up and hides the skeleton,

but beneath the words the familiar framework stands out boldly enough to be easily recognized.

Different from a play, from a literary story, from any other style of writing, a news story begins with the news; in other words, the culmination of the story is put first. The opening paragraph contains the climax. There is no leading up to a situation step by step until the point of interest is gradually reached, but, on the contrary, the first words reveal the entire situation and the rest of the story only leads in a circle to the opening lines.

There is a belief in the newspaper business that people as a rule do not care to read the papers very thoroughly, that they want to know exactly how much news there is in a story, but only if it in-

terests them particularly will they read on for the details.

Those who do not desire the details can obtain the news quickly by scanning the opening paragraphs.

. . . . . .

A general news story analyzed will show these divisions: THE INTRODUCTION: THE CAUSE: THE EFFECT: ATTENDING CIRCUMSTANCES and CONCLUSION.

These divisions may be defined as follows:

Introduction.—The main facts of the story in brief. Giving an idea of what happened, where it happened, and the people concerned.

Cause.—The incident or happening upon which the story is based.

Effect.—The facts that make up the story, told in detail.

Attending Circumstances.—Theories and incidents indirectly connected with the story.

Conclusion. — The finishing touches necessary to bring the story to an end.

To understand clearly how a news story is analyzed, take the following account and study its divisions.

. . . . . .

(News story from *The World.*)

FOUGHT SIX POLICEMEN!

John Otto, a Supposed Lunatic, Gives Them a Hard Tussle.

Finally Overpowered and Taken to Bellevue in an Ambulance.

Six policemen had a pitched battle this morning with a man thought to be a maniac. It took place at Fifteenth Street

and Second Avenue and lasted for over half an hour. The man is a veritable giant in strength and stature. Before he was subdued the clothing of two of the policemen was torn from their backs, one had a badly cut lip, and all bore marks of the combat, in the shape of bruised faces and bloody clothes.

The man gave the name of John Otto, says he is twenty-six years old and a porter.

It was just after three o'clock, when Policeman John Magner reached the southeast corner of Fifteenth Street and Second Avenue. A woman came up to him suddenly out of the darkness, and clutching him by the arm said:

"Sir, I have been assaulted; a man knocked me down."

"Where is he now?"

"I don't know; he went away."

Questioned further, the woman said she had left her house to go for a physician, when she met the man, whom she did not know, and he struck her.

The policeman noticed that she was a

modest-looking, pretty woman, and that she was greatly excited.

Suddenly, as she talked, she turned around and uttered a shriek:

"There he is now!" she cried.

Magner turned at the cry, and there alongside of a railing before a brownstone house stood a tall man; his arms were folded, and he looked intently at the policeman and the woman. Magner went up to him.

"Who are you?" he asked gruffly.

In another instant the policeman was lying on his back on the pavement and the big man was on top of him. That was the beginning of the battle. Over and over the two rolled, but the policeman soon saw he was no match for the man. Time and time again the officer was struck in the face and choked. He called loudly for help, but the street was deserted, and there was no response to his cries. Speaking of it afterward the policeman said "His fingers were like living steel that every second tightened about my throat."

Magner would undoubtedly have been strangled had not Policemen Roach, Eaton, and Wren come running up the street. Then the fight was renewed, but the man proved a match for all four and they were forced to defend themselves against the continued attacks of the maniac, for it seemed impossible to subdue him. Three times he was hit on the head with one of the policemen's short clubs, but he fought on, the blood streaming down his face covering the policemen as they fought. The four kept up a continual outcry; the maniac did not utter a sound.

All the time the struggle was going on, the young woman stood nearby and looked on. Policemen Murphy and Boyle, who were in the adjoining precinct, further down Second Avenue, heard the cries, but for a time hesitated to leave their precinct. When the cries continued, however, they deserted their post and ran to the assistance of their comrades.

Now there were six against one. It was terrific odds, and the man, weak from the loss of blood, was finally overpowered.

Then five of the policemen held him down while Magner telephoned for an ambulance. It was feared that the man had been badly hurt; the policemen certainly were.

The man lay quietly enough until the ambulance came. Then he was manacled. He was considered safe, then, for a big leather belt was strapped around his waist, to which the manacles were attached by chains. The surgeon examined the man's head, and said he had only scalp wounds, but had lost a great deal of blood. When he was lifted into the ambulance his eyes were closed and he seemed unconscious.

"Can you take him alone?" asked one of the policemen.

"Oh, he's all right now," answered the surgeon. Just then the driver of the ambulance uttered a cry and disappeared from his seat. He was in the bottom of the vehicle with the maniac's terrible fingers about his throat. The man had broken the chains that held him!

Immediately the almost exhausted policemen were in the ambulance, holding

the man. His wrists had the steel bands on them now, and he could not struggle as he did before, but he was not easy to conquer.

It was decided that three of the policemen should attend him to Bellevue Hospital. All the way the man fought. At the hospital he was put in a strait-jacket.

The policemen were treated for their injuries. Magner's lip was cut and his face swelled. The others were scratched and bruised. One of the sleeves had been torn from Eaton's coat; the uniforms of the other policemen were sad wrecks.

When the man had been taken to the hospital the woman disappeared. She had stood silently by until the end. One of the policemen thought he had seen the woman before, but he was not sure. Every effort was made to find her, but without success. It is believed that she knows who the man is. He would say nothing at the hospital after giving his name.

Analyzed, it will be found that the story was written in this manner:

In the Introduction is written the substance of the story; the fight, who fought, where they fought, who the man that fought the six policemen was, and the condition of the policemen when it was all over.

For the Cause there is the woman's appeal to the policeman.

For the Effect we have the story of the struggle in sequential detail.

Under the Attending Circumstances division there is the journey to the hospital in the ambulance and the disposition of the prisoner.

In conclusion, is the disappearance of the woman, the efforts made to find her, and the suggestion that she doubtless knew more of the maniac than she had told.

In some stories it will be found that the Effect is placed before the Cause.

The general rule to be followed is that if the effect can clearly be told without mentioning the cause then the Effect is to be placed before the Cause. In this way the latest news of the story is told first.

Sometimes it is necessary to write what is called a "running" story; for instance, when in a court or meeting of any kind the copy must be written as events take place.

The illustration herewith given of this form of writing is from the report of a billiard match between Schaefer and Slosson. Schaefer on the previous night, in stopping play, had left the balls on the table and was to go on with his unfinished run.

The reporter wrote this brief introduction before the game commenced:

"Jacob Schaefer, the little Wizard of billiards, who nipped victory out of seem-

ingly impending defeat in the opening engagement on Monday night with Slosson the Student, his able rival, was the first to resume play in the big six-night balk-line match at Madison Square Garden Concert Hall last night. The Wizard had piled up an unfinished closing run of 120 on Monday night, and he had the privilege of prolonging it and having his opening inning added to the score of the seventeenth inning."

Having written so much the reporter waited until the game opened. Then when Schaefer had finished his run he went on with the story:

"He opened with a spread draw at the bottom of the table, and managed to pick up 30 slowly before a miscue on a draw cut short the run at a total of 159, the highest thus far in the cue battle."

From this point the story was written and sent piecemeal to the newspaper office as the innings were played, thus:

"Slosson's opening effort of the night earned him a zero. He strove for the balk-line at his next chance and began some of that deft magic of delicate cue work that has brought him both fame and ducats."

And so on until the end. When the night's game came to a close a few lines in conclusion were added, and the copy was ready for the printer.

The "running" story is a difficult style of writing and not very satisfactory. But where there is little time and much to be written it is employed, as it is the quickest way of getting the news to the office.

VI.

EVIDENCE: HOW WRITTEN

COURT evidence is reported in various ways, and the fullness with which it is written up depends upon the importance of the case from a news standpoint; and this importance depends upon the human interest involved.

There are times when the evidence is taken verbatim, and others when the merest outline is necessary.

As an illustration take the following portion of the evidence which came up before a Senate investigating committee in New York City, and the manner in which various newspapers treated it in print.

Police Commissioner Sheehan was on

the stand, examined by lawyer (now Recorder) John W. Goff. The evidence herewith given is verbatim and is a copy of the record of the court stenographer.

EVIDENCE

Question. Did you ever say that the escape of Katie Schubert was made possible by collusion?

Answer. To be candid with you, Mr. Goff, I will tell that the day before she sailed I read in the papers that she was in Jersey City, and I said in the Board meeting that I thought she would never return to be a witness.

Q. Did it strike you as peculiar that she was allowed to depart without testifying against Inspector McLaughlin?

A. It certainly did. During the trials of Captains Cross and Devery I tried to

bring out in her testimony the case against McLaughlin.

Q. You considered it a failure of justice?

A. In what respect?

Q. Why, a failure to prosecute a police officer on the testimony of a woman in your jurisdiction?

A. My associates acted honestly, on the advice of counsel for the Board, that the evidence against Inspector McLaughlin was not sufficient to convict.

Q. The evidence of Katie Schubert incriminated Captains Cross and Devery and Inspector McLaughlin. You say counsel advised the Board it was not prudent to put Inspector McLaughlin on trial: did you note the fact that charges were not made against him?

A. I did.

Q. Did you believe that some potent power was at work to induce Katie Schubert to sail for Europe in order to prevent the placing of Inspector McLaughlin on trial?

A. It was my opinion that McLaughlin ought to have been put on trial, and that Katie Schubert's testimony should have been taken. But I was bound to believe the counsel for the Board, Mr. Wellman.

Q. What was your opinion of the Detective Bureau for allowing her to escape?

A. If she had been under the charge of the Detective Bureau, she would not have escaped. She was in the charge of counsel.

Q. Did it not impress you as ludicrous that the chief officer of the Detective Bureau should have made such a blunder as he did?

A. The newspaper accounts were very funny.

Q. Did you ever hear rumors or reports that other than pool sellers were paying the police?

A. I may have heard rumors or received anonymous letters. I received a great many. I received one yesterday while on the stand about you, Mr. Goff. I have it here. Do you want to see it?

Q. It is not necessary, Mr. Commissioner. It might not surprise you to learn that I have received bushels of letters about you.

A. I presume so.

Q. Well, let us see, let us see. Did you ever hear that the sailmakers in South Street were blackmailed by the police.

A. No.

Q. Did you ever hear that the West

Side merchants were assessed by the police for the use of their sidewalks?

A. No.

Q. Don't you know that the merchants organized a Merchants' Protective Association, to protest against police blackmail?

A. I never heard of it, and I don't believe it. We never had any knowledge or information of the kind.

Q. Did you know the Italian fruit sellers were compelled to pay the police?

A. Only as it has been testified here.

Q. I am excluding testimony here. Did you know the police extorted tribute from the bootblacks?

A. I did not.

Q. Do you know that the Long Island clam diggers paid tribute to the police?

A. Where do they come in? I had not heard of that.

Q. I am only inquiring. Did you know that gambling houses paid protection money?

A. I may have read something like that.

Q. Did you investigate?

A. I could not investigate rumors.

Q. You investigated rumors about the pool-sellers, why not these rumors?

A. Because I had more definite information: because I was in the company of men who said pool-sellers were paying protection, but it could not be proved.

Q. Did you examine the Superintendent's last report, which stated that in New York City virtue reigned supreme; no green goods, no policy, no gambling?

A. The Superintendent's report speaks for itself.

Q. So you accepted the Superintendent's report that New York is an Eldorado of virtue, rather than the common reports as to the prevalence of protected crime?

A. I accepted the Superintendent's report.

Q. What do you do for your salary?

A. Oh, go ahead with your questions, Mr. Goff, and I'll answer you.

Q. But really, I want to know?

A. I work for my salary.

Q. What do you do?

A. I discharge all the duties of a Police Commissioner, as required by law.

Q. What are those duties?

A. I am at my office every day, and transact the business that comes before me.

Q. But what do you do?

A. A thousand and one things.

Q. But let us have details. You have testified here for three days as to absolute ignorance of everything concerning the prevalence of immorality and crime which as a Police Commissioner you should have known: you have testified that the Superintendent has refused to do his duty, and you have failed to compel him to; but even a knowledge by current report of police corruption has been satisfactorily offset in your mind by the assurance of the Superintendent to the contrary. Now what do you do for your salary?

A. I am in my office every day attending to my duties, seeing that the appropriation for the department is properly expended, and enforcing the criminal laws.

Q. This Committee has a right to know what you four gentlemen do to earn $20,000 a year; what do you do?

A. We see that the money appropriated for the department is spent properly.

Q. To see how $5,000,000 is spent; that is one thing; now tell us another.

A. We see that the police department does its full duty.

Q. The extracts from the rules and law show that the Police Board has absolute power to enforce the laws. What have the commissioners done to enforce the law?

A. We have enforced the law so far as it came within our judgment. The enforcement of law and order is in the hands of the Superintendent of Police.

Q. The evidence adduced before this

Committee has established the fact that corruption runs riot in the Police Department. Do you still think that the Board has done its duty?

A. No knowledge of corruption has been brought to the knowledge of the Police Board since I have been a Commissioner.

Q. Do you believe the police force is free from corruption?

A. My belief is that this police force is the finest in the world, and that the citizens of this city are amply satisfied with the protection it gives them.

Q. It has been so testified here that ample "protection" is awarded.

A. Well, I think the people are satisfied.

Q. Satisfied? Do you think that the poor Greek, George Alexander, was satis-

fied, when he, after pawning his watch, to pay police protection, was driven out of honest business because he had no more watches to pawn for the police?

A. That is his story; perhaps it was a good thing to drive him out.

The fullest report of this evidence was printed by the *Herald* and shows how much of the testimony, questions and answers, can be caught by a good reporter without the aid of shorthand notes. Such notes as he did take were brief, embodying the main substance of the examination, and elaborated at the conclusion of the day's session.

Q. Did you ever say that Katie Schubert was allowed to depart for Europe unmolested?

A. I said that in my belief she would never appear to testify against any one.

Q. Did you believe that her departure

was the result of collusion in order to avoid putting McLaughlin on trial?

A. I did not.

Q. Can you say why Katie Schubert was allowed to depart?

A. No, but during the trials you refer to, I repeatedly said that the same evidence applied to Inspector McLaughlin.

Q. Did you believe that some power was being used to keep Katie Schubert away in order to save McLaughlin?

A. I cannot tell you. I believe she should have been brought to testify.

Q. What is your opinion of the efficiency of the Detective Bureau in having permitted her to get away?

A. She was not in charge of the Detective Bureau, she was in charge of counsel for the department, Mr. Wellman.

Q. Did it not impress you as ridicu-

lous that the chief officer of the Detective Bureau should have made the blunders he did?

A. The newspaper accounts were very funny.

Q. How about the payment of money to the police by the poolrooms?

A. Oh, I only heard rumors to that effect. I investigated the matter, but could get no evidence.

Mr. Sheehan said that some of his information regarding the poolrooms was in the shape of anonymous letters. "For instance," he said, "I received an anonymous letter about you, Mr. Goff." As he said that he produced a letter from his pocket, and handed it to Mr. Goff for inspection.

"That is not necessary," said Mr. Goff, somewhat tartly; "I may say that I have

received bushels of such letters about you." "No doubt you have," was the response.

Mr. Goff then desired to know whether Mr. Sheehan had put the same degree of vigilance into his inquiries about alleged corruption in the police department that he would had a clerk in his own employ been similarly accused. Mr. Sheehan replied that he did all that he could have done under the circumstances.

"Well," observed Mr. Goff, "if you had a clerk in your employ, and you heard rumors regarding the way he was handling your money, would you wait for positive evidence before sifting the rumor thoroughly?"

"I told you, Mr. Goff," replied Mr. Sheehan, "that I did all I possibly could under the circumstances. I could go no further."

Q. Let us see, Mr. Commissioner. Did you ever hear that the sailmakers along South Street had to pay tribute to the police?

A. I did not.

Q. Did you ever hear the same things about Broadway merchants?

A. No.

Q. Or the Italian fruit dealers.

A. No.

Q. Or the bootblacks?

A. No.

Q. Or the Long Island clam-diggers?

A. No.

Q. Or the gambling houses?

A. Well, I might have heard such a rumor.

Q. And you say you investigated it?

A. I couldn't investigate a rumor. I would not know where to start.

Q. Are we to understand that the reports of the captains, showing that virtue reigned supreme in this city, and that there was no gambling, lulled the Police Commissioners into a sense of security?

A. We relied upon the truth of the report made by the Superintendent of Police; we had to.

Q. You have stated that in order to procure protection, it would be necessary to go to a higher authority than a policeman; now in the face of such reports, were you not inclined to suspect the Superintendent?

A. I was not.

Q. By the way, what do you do anyhow for your salary?

A. I work for it.

Q. Yes, but what do you do?

A. All the duties devolved on me by virtue of my office.

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Q. But it would seem from your testimony that you do nothing and know nothing.

A. I do my duty, I tell you.

Q. Give us a sample of what you do.

A. Anything that comes up.

Q. Tell us one thing?

A. Well, I see that the money of the department is properly spent.

Q. Oh, you do. Well give us something else?

A. I see that the Police Department does its duty.

Q. But what have the Commissioners done to enforce the law?

A. The enforcement of the law is in the hands of the uniformed members of the force.

Q. But the evidence before this Com-

mittee has established the fact that corruption has run riot there.

A. I believe that the police have given the citizens better protection within the last few years than they ever had before.

"Protection," said Mr. Goff. "Oh, yes, the citizens have got protection enough. The trouble has been that the police exacted too much for it. Take the case of George Alexander, for instance, who was driven out of his business."

"Perhaps there were good reasons for driving him out of the city," retorted the Police Commissioner. "You have only heard one side of the story."

The account printed in another paper was not so full. The editor did not desire so detailed a story, and while the reporter retained the form of the questions

and answers, he gave only the most important news.

Here it is as it was printed:

As usual, the police investigators did not deign to do such a vulgar thing as to convene on time.

It was nearly an hour after the schedule time that the Committee began business in the Superior Court. Commissioner Sheehan was on the stand, and lawyer Goff asked as a beginner:

"Do you not regard the escape of Kate Schubert as a miscarriage of justice?"

"In what respect?"

"Didn't it strike you as peculiar that she was allowed to depart without being asked about Inspector McLaughlin?"

"Yes, I said so at the time."

"Was not some potent influence at work to shield him?"

"I can't say."

"What is your opinion of the detective force in permitting her to escape?"

"I understand she was in the custody of detectives employed by the counsel to

the Board and under surveillance of the Bureau."

"Did you ever hear rumors that other institutions besides the poolrooms were paying for protection?" continued Mr. Goff.

"I heard rumors. Why, I got anonymous letters. I got one yesterday afternoon about you. Do you want to see it?" and the Commissioner took it out of his pocket.

"It is not necessary. I have received bushels of anonymous letters about you."

"It would not be fair to charge the whole police force with taking that money from the poolsellers, when only a few did," said the Commissioner.

Counsel Goff asked why the Commissioner had not brought some to justice, when rumors were flying thick and fast.

"I couldn't fasten any crime on any official."

"Let us see, corruption was pretty general. Did you know the sailmakers had to pay?"

"No."

"Did you know merchants pay?"

"No."

"Did you know Long Island clam-diggers had to pay?"

"Where did they come in?" asked the witness.

"Never mind. Did you hear gambling houses had to pay?"

"I heard rumors, but I could not trace who paid it."

Then Mr. Goff, after several moments of profound meditation, said suddenly: "What do you do to earn your salary?"

"Perform the duties devolved upon me as a Commissioner," answered the witness, who was on the alert, and Goff's little trick fell flat, as his others have.

The Commissioner said that he saw that the five million dollar appropriation for the police was properly expended.

The *World* reporter made no effort to get the evidence verbatim. He wrote a running story giving the outlines thus:

At the beginning of the proceedings,

Mr. Goff again inquired the reasons of the failure to try Inspector McLaughlin with the captains. Commissioner Sheehan repeated that for his part he had been in favor of trying McLaughlin, and said that the day before Katie Schubert's disappearance he had heard that she had gone to Jersey, and that he had stated that he thought she would never come back. In spite of his belief that the Chief of the Detective Bureau had been fooled by the woman in the most amusing manner, the Commissioner preferred to believe that Assistant District Attorney Wellman was responsible for the fugitive witness.

Sheehan said that he had been brought to a dead stop in his investigation by something which he cordially agreed with Mr. Goff in describing as a Chinese wall, but which he would not describe more specifically.

Sheehan declared himself to be the most innocent little man in New York so far as knowledge of evil is concerned.

He swore that he had never heard of petty blackmailing of bootblacks, South

Street sailmakers, peddlers, pushcart men, and Lord knows what. When asked if he had heard that there were gambling houses in every precinct in New York, Sheehan said he had heard that, but he did not know it except from rumor, and he could not investigate a rumor.

"Why," said Lawyer Goff, "didn't you institute some inquiries through the Superintendent?"

Commissioner Sheehan: "We got no report from the Superintendent, except some general reports."

Q. "And that lulled the Police Commissioners into quietude? The Superintendent's report made them disregard general rumors, and they relied on the Superintendent for the belief that New York was an Eldorado of virtue. What do you do anyway for your salary?" asked Mr. Goff.

"I work for it," said Sheehan.

After a deal of hammering Sheehan returned to the Superintendent again. Said he, "The enforcement of the laws is in the hands of the Superintendent."

These three ways of taking the evidence should be closely studied.

For practice, it would be well to attend a court session, take notes in some one case and write them up after the three styles here shown. From the newspaper report of the same case it could be seen how the story written compared with the one printed.

These examples will also serve the purpose of showing how a sermon can be reported. If of great importance it is taken in full; then again it is sometimes condensed into a few lines embodying the main thought. Between these two extremes may be written stories of varying lengths. Lectures and speeches, in fact anything in the shape of an address, may be similarly treated.

VII.

BEGINNING THE STORY

WHEN every other detail of the business of reporting is thoroughly understood, there is still the introduction to the story to which many an hour of serious thought must be given. Too little attention is usually devoted to this detail, which is really the keynote of interest and which fixes the standard for all that is to follow.

One cannot be interesting and conventional at the same time, and the reader must be both attracted and interested at the start.

The brevity of the story should not be allowed to influence the style of the intro-

duction. The same care should be expended upon the opening of a ten-line paragraph as upon a two-column story.

In writing an introduction, if the people concerned are of prominence, their names should be mentioned in the first line. Otherwise, precedence should be given to the circumstances on which the story is based. Do not use the names first, however, unless they are so well known that they will be at once recognized, as this is an ordinary and unoriginal beginning.

Here is an example of a purely conventional introduction:

"Charles Wittemann, 24 years old, of 300 East 106th Street, was arraigned before Magistrate Mott in the Harlem Police Court this morning, charged with having registered illegally on Saturday last."

This is the most commonplace opening

that could be used. Hundreds and hundreds of times those same words have served to commence Police Court stories, with changes only of name, age, residence, justice, and charge. Few care what the man's name is, much less wish to know where he lives, or before what justice he was arraigned. On the other hand, there are many who would be interested in knowing of the charge on which the man was arrested. Therefore the news of the story as well as the point of interest is much better considered in this other introduction which was used by another paper for the same story, the same day:

"Acting under advice he had received from an officer of the German Reform Union, Charles Wittemann registered Saturday from his place of business instead of from his residence. Yesterday he was arrested for illegal registration."

This paragraph contains the story in a nutshell, so that any one at all concerned in matters political can read on and find out all about the age and residence of the offender, how he was arraigned in court, and what disposition was made of his case.

So many stories of fires must be written that unless especially on his guard the reporter after a time falls inadvertently into commonplace modes of expression. There is a partiality for telling how many stories high was the burned building, who saw the fire first, who turned in the alarm, and at exactly what time.

For instance the reporter who wrote the following introduction used all the commonplace expressions possible:

"Fire started this morning on the second floor of the five-story brownstone building 349 Broadway, and burned so rapidly that before the firemen could con-

trol it the building had been destroyed. The flames were discovered at 8:20 o'clock by Policeman Haggerty of the Leonard Street station, who sent in the alarm."

As a contrast to this, here is another introduction to the same story, which smacks of interest from the first word:

"Flames burned away the northwest corner of Leonard Street and Broadway at 8 o'clock this morning, and had penetrated well in toward the centre of the compact square of business houses before they were controlled. About $200,000 damage was done, but the property was well insured. The structures destroyed were old and out of keeping with those of the other three corners, so that the loss is expected to have a compensation in the erection of larger, more modern buildings."

It is commonplace to start a story with "A" or "An." Never under any circumstances commence with "Yesterday" or "Last week." If such a start is made

the reader will imagine it is old news. These are days of up-to-date living and the news of to-day, not of last week, is wanted. If the occurrences happened last week, say so, but not in the first line.

One day, New York was astonished by the report of a bank defalcation, involving a large sum of money and sensational in character. Every paper in the city and throughout the country devoted columns to the story. The unusual importance of the news demanded a strong opening to the story.

This is the introduction *The Sun* used, quite an ordinary one giving a plain statement of facts. The news was told in the introduction, and the four columns which followed simply elaborated the opening:

"The National Shoe and Leather Bank, at Broadway and Chambers street, has

been robbed of $354,000 by Samuel C. Seely, one of its bookkeepers, and Frederick Barker, a depositor.

"Seely fled a week ago Saturday, leaving a confession in his lawyer's hands. It is supposed he fled by steamship.

"Barker was drowned yesterday afternoon at his country home at Sand's Point. There is of course a strong suspicion of suicide. Barker, who was a supposedly wealthy and respectable lawyer in this city, past 60 years of age, had told his accomplice before the latter's flight that he was too old to run away himself, and would stay and face the music. It is alleged by Seely that Barker got all but $11,000 of the stolen $354,000."

Four and one-half columns were devoted to the story by the *Daily News*.

A clearer idea of the enormity of the theft was conveyed in this introduction. The unusual circumstances attending the crime were pointed out, a description of the two men concerned given, a hint as to

what became of the money, and the bank's condition.

"All New York was startled yesterday afternoon by the announcement of one of the largest bank defalcations of recent years. The National Shoe and Leather Bank had been a loser to the extent of $354,000, at the hands of Samuel C. Seely, one of its oldest and most trusted employees. Aside from the enormous amount involved in the defalcation the story of the crime is accompanied by some of the most sensational developments ever read. Seely was a bookkeeper, living modestly in an unpretentious house at 422 Halsey Street, Brooklyn, and from all that can be learned, was a man of exemplary habits. Nevertheless, there is no doubt that he has been stealing from his bank for a period of nine years. He is said to have had as an accomplice in the person of a Frederick Barker, a New York lawyer, who was a depositor in the bank.

"The story has a tragic side in the reported suicide of Barker, in the bay, near Sands Point, his summer residence, yes-

terday. Most of the money, it is said, was squandered in the promotion of a famous bicycle railroad.

"The shock of the announcement of the robbery was quickly tempered by the bank's statement that the institution was in a sound condition, and able to pay all depositors—a statement which was confirmed unanimously by all the members of the Clearing House Committee that had investigated the bank's accounts."

It will be seen that the writer of the *News* story was careful to avoid libel. As it was not a clearly established fact that Frederick Barker was an accomplice, the introduction states that he is "said to be." Nor was it more than a conjecture that Barker had committed suicide, so the account refers to the "reported" suicide. There was reason to believe that the money had gone into the railroad scheme, but this was not positively known, so could not be put down as a fact.

The *Herald* told in a crisp, pointed manner every detail of the story; who were those concerned in it, what became of the criminals, and described the condition of the bank. Although following the ordinary form, there was an individuality in the opening paragraphs that made them attractive.

They read:

"A defalcation of $354,000 in the Shoe and Leather National Bank, the flight of bookkeeper Seely who stole the money only to hand it over to a man who had him in his power; the search for the arch conspirator, who is said to be lawyer Frederick Barker, and his death by drowning while the detectives were hunting for him, is the epitome of what is one of the most startling stories of crime unearthed in this city in many a day.

"The thefts began nine years ago and continued up to a few days before Seely took refuge in flight, having learned that

a change in the system of ledger keeping would make further concealment of his crime an impossibility. And when it was discovered, the bank found itself with its whole surplus of $190,000 wiped out, and a deficit of $150,000, which the stockholders must make good."

The introduction to the story in the New York *Press* told the story in a brief. and interesting way :

"By a clever, carefully-planned and cold-blooded system, a bookkeeper of the National Shoe and Leather Bank has been robbing that institution for the past nine years. He was in collusion with a depositor, who has been doing business with the bank for thirty years, and the amount of money that they stole is declared to be $354,000 by the directors, and the National Bank examiner.

"The conspirators might have continued with their systematic robberies for many years more had the bank not decided about two weeks ago to change its system of bookkeeping in a small way. That

would have put two other men upon the books that have been in charge of the guilty bookkeeper, Samuel C. Seely.

"Quick to see the peril threatened, he disappeared, after making a partial confession to his lawyer, and his mammoth defalcation was discovered directly his books fell into an examiner's hands."

But it was left for the *Morning Advertiser* to give an introduction in no degree conventional, to disregard the ordinary rules, and to begin the story unlike any other paper.

In this introduction, Seely, the most important figure, was picked out and a good analysis given of the man around whom the greater part of the four columns that followed was written.

The *Advertiser* opening:

For the past ten years, when the bank examiners went to the National Shoe and Leather Bank to look over affairs, bookkeeper Samuel C. Seely stood at their elbows and helped, in an humble sort of

way, fetching books, identifying ledgers, explaining the system of accounts. The eagle-eyed and sharp-witted examiners found him never obtrusive, never in the way, but always at hand and always obliging. So obliging!

Year after year the mild-mannered bookkeeper breathed a sigh of relief when the bank examiners left. He went back to his desk and plodded away. The bank officers considered him a model employee. They increased his salary. The United States Guarantee Company, surety on his bond for $7,500, considered him a model risk.

On Friday, Nov. 16, the bookkeeper went to the office of Lawyer Frank W. Angel, of No. 108 Fulton street, and said:

"Frank, I've taken some money that I can't replace. I'm in trouble."

"How much?" asked the lawyer.

"It's over $300,000—maybe $400,000 I can't hide it any longer."

Angel stared at the man incredulously, and then laughed at him. The bookkeeper twiddled his thumbs and looked reproachfully at his friend.

"Sam," said the lawyer, "your father was insane. Now you are insane."

"No; it's way over $300,000."

"You mean $300. You've worried over it until you are crazy on the subject. You imagine——"

"No; I've told you the truth."

VIII.

WRITING THE DETAILS.

BREVITY is best secured by adhering strictly to facts, telling them in a plain straightforward way without any attempt at literary picturesqueness. Those who read the newspapers do so not so much for the sake of passing time, as for the purpose of finding out what is going on in the world. The newspaper writer may have a grace of diction that is fairly dazzling, unsurpassed powers of description, and a remarkable gift of diving into the unfathomable; but the newspaper reading public will not appreciate these qualities half so much as a terse manner of recording the news. Facts, not words, are wanted. So the high-sounding phrases should all be left out and none but the simplest and most expressive forms used.

Do not use too many adjectives. Make the sentences short, crisp, to the point, using as few "ands" as possible.

But while all the facts must be written, they should not read like a catalogue of goods on sale. It is well enough to forswear superfluous elegance and eloquence, but the reader must be interested as well as instructed, and one's style must not be dry or dull.

A careful study of the best newspapers will show how facts can be plainly yet readably expressed.

A newspaper story should be a simple statement of fact and not an expression of opinion by the writer. Let the reader draw his own conclusions. The duty of the writer is to chronicle the occurrence, giving the views of interested people. If the papers desire to express more than this they will do so editorially.

The new reporter should compare every line of his that finds its way into print

with the copy as he wrote it. He will then see exactly what changes have been made, where he has been ambiguous, where verbose. After a while he will know just what his editor *does not* want, and that is a great step in advance. Some reporters never learn what to leave out.

In reporting an interview it is usually undesirable to put down the questions of the reporter. These are best embodied in the answers, for he has at times to ask a great many that seem useless in order to lead the person he is interviewing into an admission that he would not otherwise make. Then, too, the public care only about the result of his labors, so that it is more than bad taste to introduce himself personally. Especially do not comment upon the manner in which the reporter has been treated. He may be well or ill received, but that is all a part of the newspaper business and depends upon the kind of people with whom he has to

deal. The petty triumphs, victories, or failures of the reporter are not matters of news, and should be kept out of print.

The following examples are taken from the daily papers and will serve to show how general is the use of superfluous words, and how by omitting them a story can be made much stronger. In these cases the words in italics should have been omitted. All are mistakes frequently made.

"He is a bricklayer *by trade* and reputed a steady man, though he takes an occasional glass his friends say."

Besides the unnecessary words there is another common mistake in the construction of this paragraph. The man's occupation and his habits are commented upon in one sentence, whereas only one fact at a time should be taken up.

"But *in order that he might* prosecute the case, it was necessary that immediate action be taken."

The word "to" would have served for the italicized words.

In the same way, "to" may often be used instead of "for the purpose of."

"Moore was arrested to-day *and locked up*."

Of course he was locked up after being arrested.

"He says he does not fear the outcome of his trial *on* Tuesday." Never use "on" before the days of the week.

"*A man by the name of* Henry Tijon fell and sprained his ankle at the corner of Broadway and Bleecker Street, under peculiar circumstances, this morning."

Just six words too many in that one paragraph.

"Henry Hilbert, 27 years old, of 29 East Third street, *became involved in a quarrel* with his friend James Patterson," etc.

Why not say simply they quarrelled?

"The building was *completely* destroyed."

If it was destroyed, the destruction of necessity must have been complete. It is just as absurd to talk of a fire which has been "completely" extinguished.

"*Two men named* Harris Wilbur and De Witt Thomas were arrested," etc.

Everybody knows that Messrs. Wilbur and Thomas were not four men, and the three words are superfluous. Also sentences which start, "A man by the name of," are poor form.

"A *young* man 20 years old was killed this morning," etc.

Of course when this age is mentioned it is evident that he is a "young" man.

"It was a *very* fashionable wedding."

The fact would have been better expressed had the "very" been omitted. This word should be used sparingly as it does not add force.

"The two-story stable of Henry Holt, at 361 East 89 Street, was *destroyed by fire* last night," etc.

By saying "burned" the sentence could have been made more terse.

"When the danger was over the young woman fainted *away*."

"When he met *with* the man at the doctor's office, there was a disagreeable scene."

"Hastings went *along* with him, but it was under protest."

"It was fully two hours later when the boat pulled up alongside *of* the dock."

"Justice Simms asked him *over* again, if he had made the confession alleged."

"Opposite *to* that house is the residence of Mayor Van Wyck."

"First *of all* were the three men."

"Besides not being worthy *of* their esteem."

"John Hume, the most severely injured, fell *a distance of* fifty feet."

"Fire broke out *at an* early *hour* this morning in the two-story building," etc.

"The *dead* body of a man was taken from the East River this morning."

So much for useless words.

There are other errors so common that it should not be difficult to keep them in mind and guard against them.

For instance it is better to refrain from saying that a person lives "on" a street. "In" is better. People also travel "in" a train.

A woman is "married to" a man, so the announcement that "William Haines was married to Miss Louise Yeates last evening" is incorrect.

The other day the statement appeared that "President Martin differed with his colleagues."

This was a peculiar thing for Mr. Martin to do. In fact an impossibility. It must have been that he differed "from" his colleagues. It would have been better for him to have agreed "with" them.

"Mr. Wilber will locate in Chicago in the fall."

Properly speaking he could not locate. He might locate a certain house; or he

might locate a man, but he could hardly locate himself.

"By his side there lay a 48 calibre Smith & Wesson revolver, of old pattern."

Now who cares what the calibre of the revolver was, who made it, or whether it was of old or new pattern? The fact that there was a revolver was all that was necessary.

Another misused word is "about." We read that "about four o'clock"; or, "In a room about ten feet square"; or, "A man about thirty years old."

Ordinarily the exact hour, or size, or age need not be told. Usually it does not make the slightest difference whether a certain incident occurred at 9:45 o'clock or earlier or later. Of course there are exceptions, as in the case of a murder where a few moments may make a great difference in the case of a man's proving an alibi, and the exact time would be of the utmost consequence. In this as in all else the reporter must use discrimination.

IX.

CONVENTIONAL EXPRESSIONS

THERE are certain time-worn phrases which should be avoided as much as possible. Yet some reporters employ these ancient expressions in writing entire stories and their work is therefore commonplace and without individuality. It is, of course, less trouble to resort to the familiar sentences, but yielding too often to the temptation one is presently unable to throw off the tyranny of habit.

The following examples are taken from newspapers published within a few days of each other. They are in constant use and can be picked at random from any issue of almost any newspaper.

"James Henner, the well-known clubman, was arrested last night for assaulting

Timothy Brown, the prominent banker."

For the unoriginal reporter ordinary people do not exist. Everybody is "well-known," "prominent," "influential," or "well-to-do." In the same way they will write of "The beautiful and accomplished" daughter of John Brown, from mere force of habit and not that it is in any way certain that the lady possesses these qualities.

"A large and appreciative audience witnessed the performance."

This is not only conventionally expressed, but the word "appreciative" often conveys an untruth. People do not always appreciate a performance even though they applaud it generously. They may simply enjoy it.

"Springing to his feet, with madness in his eyes, Caperruto whipped out a revolver and fired at the departing woman."

Many reporters seem to think that the only way for a man to draw a knife or

revolver from his pocket is to "whip it out."

"It bids fair to be a great success."

This is not only time-worn but has no meaning save that accorded by conventional usage.

"The worst storm in many years passed over the city this morning."

This is much used and is rather sweeping. The conditions under which the reporter viewed the storm may have made it seem to him one fierce beyond precedent, but this is an extreme statement. In this particular case it was incorrect, for the weather reports showed that the storm was not an unusual one. The reporter had doubtless many times employed this stereotyped expression in reference to fires, murders, and accidents, changing only a few words to suit each occasion.

"All in all it was a scene that beggars description."

This statement has outlived its useful-

ness, and is as bad as its companion "in an instant pandemonium reigned."

"She fell backward from the window, turned once in the air, and in an instant she had struck the ground with a dull thud."

"Dull thuds" only appear in the copy when the writer lacks the power of otherwise describing sound.

The subterfuge "et cetera" is invariably employed when the writer cannot think of anything more to say.

People who have "disappeared as completely as though the earth had opened and swallowed them" have been too often alluded to; as have those others "drowned like rats in a hole."

So limited is the vocabulary of many reporters that they have but little choice in the selection of adjectives and other qualifying words. To these everything in the nature of an accident is "sickening," "awful," "ghastly," "terrible" or "appalling."

Over and over these words are used in comparatively trivial instances, until when some real catastrophe occurs deserving the strongest possible treatment, all the emphatic expressions have been so often used that there is no power in them, and they become trivial in the writing.

Abuse also destroys the value of the words "pretty," "grand," "splendid" and "lovely."

In many cases the story is stronger if adjectives and adverbs are omitted, or at the most used sparingly. In all cases the use of the right word in the right place is to be striven for.

X.

PREPARING "COPY."

WHEN writing manuscript, or "copy," the reporter too often forgets that somebody else has to read it.

Write legibly.

It is safer to print proper names, as mistakes in these are easily made and may cause much awkwardness.

Do not forget to cross the t's and dot the i's.

To save time there are signs that may be used to indicate certain desired corrections. Three lines beneath a small letter will show the printer that he is to set it as a capital.

A line drawn obliquely through a capital letter from right to left makes it a small letter.

Put a ring around all periods.

Put paragraph marks at the beginning of all paragraphs.

Three lines beneath words or sentences show that they are to be printed in large capitals. Two lines indicate small capitals. One line, italics.

Figures to be spelled out in the printing should have a ring about them, and this applies to abbreviated words that are to be printed in full.

A double cross at the end of each story indicates its conclusion.

Make your meaning absolutely clear, and bear in mind that the slightest mark has a meaning for the printer, and that he has neither time nor inclination to ponder over your work in an effort to find out what you are trying to express.